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THE
HISTORY
OF
ROGER.





HONESTY the best POLICY:

OR, THE

HISTORY

OF

ROGER.

L O N D O N:

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M,DCC,LII.



THE
HISTORY
OF
ROGER.

ROGER was born of honest parents in *Yorkshire*, and very well to pass, who gave him a good education; and tho' he had no liking to any of the *professions*, yet was not without his share of the *greek* and *latin*; from which he got this advantage, that he could *spell* better than most *farmers* in the parish, and knew the *signification of words*, as well as if he had been bred at *Cambridge*, and turn'd out *master of arts*. He seemed to have no design of pushing his fortune in the wide world,

Roger the great speaker

world ; but sat down early on his own farm, followed husbandry, and improving a *headland* or two he had near him, which were quite run out of heart by the slovenly management of his ancestors, who had, most of them, too much wit to mind their business, and let things run to wreck strangely.

R O G E R looked into every thing himself, ditched, and fenced, and limed, but never *burn'd* his land, and soon grew a *topping farmer*.

THERE was a cousin of his, who had a power of special farms in the *West-riding*, great royalties, and stately woods. *Roger* prevailed on him to put the management of them into his hands ; and he not only preserved and enlarged them, but made the family interest better than ever it was. This got *Roger* great credit in his own parish, and all the manor about him ; they began to find out he was a prudent, managing man ; and resorted to him for advice at vestries, leets, and quarter-sessions. Whoever he recommended for overseers, waywardens, headboroughs, or the like, were sure to be chosen, and always behaved honestly.

IN the mean time, he followed his farming, and kept a warm house in the old-fashon'd way ; and seldom stirred abroad,

Roger's Cousin . . . and Burlington

abroad, unless to make up differences among neighbours, or to meet the *hundred* for appplotting the land-tax ; and by his good will would never have gone farther, or meddled out of the parish and manor, if the neighbours had let him sit still. But it happened, at this time, that *Slyboots*, the *Secretary*, got a commission to be Lord-lieutenant of the county ; and besides arraying the militia, came with a power (as all the county believed) to get new taxes laid on at the sessions, and double the county charges. The neighbours, one and all, entreated *Roger* to go to the county town, and oppose these *new rates*. Tho' he thought there was no such design, yet he chearfully went, and very plainly told the governor his mind in private, and warned him of trying what he could never compass. Now, whether it was that *Slyboots* had no projects in his head of that kind, or found he could not bring them to bear, certain it is he did no hurt to the county, and has ever since appeared to be an honest man. But what alarmed them was his character for sense, and cunning, and politicks. And, to be sure, they were not out in their notion of him ; for he could bambouzle *Old-nick* himself, if he set about it, and make him do journey-work ; much more could he

outwit

Old Nick's Councillor Slyboots.

Sly Boots. Lord Lieutenant.

outwit the poor country folks, which makes me believe he never set about it *in earnest*. It is impossible else he could have miss'd it; for he could out-drink, out-talk, out-joke every man in the province, and could make a fool, at any time, of the best *Norfolk Attorney*, if he would let him *parly with him*. Besides, he was, at all times, so *good-humoured* and *free*, and pushed his bottle so joviously among his acquaintance, that it was beyond the power of honest men to resist or refuse him any thing. The whole secret of his behaviour in *Yorkshire* was, that old *Suck-fist*, who governed every thing at court, wanted a pretence to ruin him, as he found *Slyboots* too hard for him, and too *smoaky* to be bantered. Now, says *Suck-fist* to himself, if he does things beyond his commission, the county will complain of him, and I'll back them; if he be negligent in doing his busines, I'll get him turn'd off. But *Slyboots* cunningly put the busines on a couple of *moon-calves*, *Balaam the Parson*, and *Numps the Seneschal*, who he knew could do nothing, and then laid the blame on them; and, in his merry moods, would compare himself to a famous rope-dancer, then in town, who walked the slack-rope with two *lubberly porters* tyed to her heels.

BUT

Suck-fist. — Robt. Walpole
Balaam the Parson, & Numps the
Seneschal. Private Bolter of Lord

BUT, whatever were *Slyboots's* intentions, he could make no hand of *Roger*, who drank with him, laughed with him, shook hands and parted for the country, where he took to his old way of living, and said nothing of the matter ; for tho' *Roger* has often prevented things being done that would bear hard on the farmers, yet he never vapoured, or bounced, or took on him, which was so much the worse for him ; for the less he said of himself, the more others talked, and agreed, one and all, that he was the only man to serve them on *occasion*, as well in the *county at large*, as in the *parish*.

IT happened the *headborough*, who had been chosen many years successively to that place, died, and every body's eyes were on *Roger* to succeed him. The *east* and *west-ridings* would hear of nobody else, 'till *Roger* honestly told them, there was a farmer in the *north-riding* who could serve them better than he, at that time, and would do all he could to have him into the place ; and he was chosen without opposition, but in a little time died too. Then *Roger* had no excuse, and took the office briskly upon himself, tho' his improvements at the farm must stop, and he knew he should have but little pocket-money out of the place, after

B buying

buying new cloaths, and treating the constables every quarter-session.

SLYBOOTS was now gone out of the county, and the next who came into the commission had a different character, and told them positively, at the meeting of the session, *he wanted nothing*, and only desired they would take care of themselves. No body ever doubted his word; but, however, *Roger* thought there was no hurt in *keeping a good luck out*, and well he did so; for some people had taken in their heads, that the county was harrassed by quarter-sessions, and it would be a great easement to have *no more*, but agree *then* what *rates* should be paid every year, and let the people stay at home, and mind their plowing and sowing. This contrivance was ingenious enough, and many of the justices were for it; but the de---l a bitt could they answer some objections. Suppose, says one, the *County Treasurer* should squander the money, who will call him to account? If the constables don't do their duty, who will *fine* them? If the army moroded, built sconces, kicked the neighbours, ruined the game, where should they be tried? To all which questions, and a thousand more, there was but this answer: That the *county governors* would always be honest men; that the *county treasurer* would

would scorn to pocket their money ; the constables should be the best sort of people in the world ; and the soldiers as quiet as so many lambs. Almost half the justices closed with these *reasons* ; but Roger and his friends thought it possible, that once in an age there might be a *crook-finger'd treasurer*, a *knavish constable*, or a *swaggering captain* ; and of the two, were rather of opinion the experiment ought not to be made, and so outvoted the justices who were for it. No body charged the governor with having a hand in this, or tampering with the justices, tho' it was thought he could not have misliked it, as it would have saved him a world of trouble. The *same people*, a little while after, observed how unwholesome the fashion was of wearing *woollen cloaths*, that *linen coats* were much better, and would come cheaper, as that manufacture was in plenty all over the north ; and wanted a rule to be made, that the *exciseman* should cutt the skirts off every coat made of wool, and the boys have liberty to squirt the kennel on them, as they do now on *callicoes* and *cambricks* ; but Roger seldom changed the fashion of his *cloaths*, and told the projectors it would certainly throw the whole county into agues, and bring such *fits* on them as all the *powder* in *Mexico* could never cure :

So that project was never mentioned more; and, from that time, *Roger* had so gained the good opinion of the justices, that for some years, all *whims* and *projects* seemed to be at an end, as they found he would never give into them. But all the while *Roger's* credit with the justices was looked on with an evil eye, by many of the top men in the county, as well as neighbours in his own parish, who were trying underhand to lessen it; but the first who set up openly against him was *Nim*, the *corporal*. He was a *cunning shaver*, and a notable *Jack at all trades*. He was first a foot Soldier, and a good duty-man, only he would play cards too often on guard. He was always at *putt* and *all fours*, got most of his Comrade's pay, and, in the end, stripped all his acquaintance. He was on the point of getting a halbert when he quitted the army. He married a rich widow; then another rich widow. He got by selling, got at buying, and every way money flowed in a-pace. He had lately bought a fine farm from *Roger's* cousin, and almost bounded him. With this encrease of interest, he thought himself big enough to attack *Roger* in his head quarters. Besides, he had concerns in other counties, monies in bank, and was twice the *better man*, as we say. He was moreover one of the *quorum*.

He

The corporal. and Buxton

He had a son, who was sent to see the world early, and learn fashions, and a clever person of a man he was, and a *beau* among the play-houses and *dancing-schools*. *Nim* laid a design to aggrandize his family, by marrying him to a daughter of the *new deputy*, who was quite a different kind of man either than *Slyboots*, or the last deputy; he seemed to desire nothing but *peace* and *plenty*, and was as plain and *downright* as any ordinary *Gaffer*; his friends would fain have him take state upon him, but he could not away with it. *Nim* brushed up to him, told him how many farms he had; how many tenants; what an interest he had among the justices; that if he would let him manage his affairs he might *walk the fields* from morning to night, and not trouble himself with business. He liked the proposal, (for he hated *gaffring* and *disputing*) and closed with *Nim's* request to marry his daughter to his son and heir. *Nim* was now sure he had the game in his hand, and resolved to take the first opportunity to have a tryal of skill with *Roger*. It happened one of the *Verdurer's* died in the *East-riding*, and another must be chosen to keep the *king's game*. Tho' *Roger's* interest was less in that *Riding* than in the two other, yet he would not let his *bone go* without a snap or two.

*He had a son. — Education
Verdurer. — The Election of Emmerley*

two. *Nim* told the deputy there should be no struggle, that not one of the *pack* would venture to shew his teeth against him, that he would carry it off with a *Tally-ho!*. *Roger* laugh'd in his sleeve, and knew he had the better interest, (tho' he did not chuse to talk in dog-language) and very quietly put his own man in the *verdurer's* place. This was a deadly blow to *Nim*; he saw the substantial farmers were for *Roger*. If he could'n't carry his point in his own royalty and *Riding*, what must he do in other parts? So he resolv-ed to join with *Roger* 'till a better time of-fered, and indeed was quite desperate when he *came to terms*. It was not long 'till an accident fell out that revived his hopes; it happened, critically, that the parson of the *minster* died by a surfeit of pork; it was a main good parish, with a swinging glebe; he had *prebends*, and *petty canons* in his disposal, could rule the *vestry*, recommend overseers, and govern quite down to curates, clerks and sextons; which, with his power of *benediction*, made him altogether one of the top men in the *county*. *Nim* resolved to avail him-self of this opportunity, and recommend one to the *deputy*, to come in the place of old *Trulliber*, who should join him against *Roger*.

THERE

minster. private & friendly

THERE was a young curate lately come into the neighbourhood, a great *crony* of Nim's family, and well liked by every body else. He was sprightly, generous and good natured ; a good scholar, and a good preacher for a young man ; but, above all, had so taking, modest a behaviour, that every one who saw him became his friend, or, at least, was wise enough to dissemble his dislike. All wheels were set a going to make him parson of the *minster* ; and to say justice, the young man was not idle in doing for himself. He came in with universal applause, tho' one of *his* years had never been in that place before. Roger was glad of his preferment, and whenever the parish met at vestry, or the *bundred*, to applot the land-tax, shew'd him great civility and compliments, which the parish observing, increased their respect for the parson ; and the few who were dissatisfied with his advancement changed their note ; his youth was now no longer an objection ; it was an happiness to have an active young man among them, instead of an old *mumpimus*, to sleep all sermon time, or an old *pig-doctor*, who had no learning but a receipt for curing the measles : And, for a good while, he gave general satisfaction, till bad company was the spoil of him, and

by

a young Curate. The present private

by degrees led him into projects he never thought to meddle with in the beginning.

AMBITION, as well as a *law-suit*, may be compared to a *wire-mill*; if it get you by the finger, it draws in your whole body; or, ambition grows on men as they advance higher, as on going up a hill, every step enlarges the prospect: But whether it was his *own ambition*, or only friendship for *ambitious men*, it is fact he plunged over head and ears, and did not look how he leaped.

NIM had a *brave boy* for his second son, a *buck* and a *buffer*. He was a great favourite of the old corporal, who spared nothing to make a *man of him*, and got him another daughter of the deputy for a wife, and a tight wench she was; but it was no easy matter to bring young *Hopeful* to take a liking for business; *foot-ball* and *prison-bars* were his delight. He could never be sober for the blood of him, or orderly, or rest a moment in a place; if he went to sermon, he was every turn whistling or kicking his heels, and the curate said he would never come to good. But *Nim* was resolved to have him a man of business, and got him put into his own place, which was *surveyor* of the *excise*; and indeed it was time for *Nim* to quit, as, either from carelessness or having his ink

on & on on young *Hopeful* Co. Don
by

ink too thick, he was very apt to leave blots in his book. Well, a surveyor was young *Hopeful*, and did well enough; his carriage was more stay'd, and he looked sometimes (especially in company with the excisemen) as if he was *thinking*; but, when a holyday came, he was as gamesom as ever, and he contrived to make more holydays than are mark'd in the almanack, having bought (for that purpose) a new prayer-book, with births, martyrdoms, massacres and coronations, all put together along with *saints*, male and female, *blacks* and *whites*; he religiously observed them all, and would have honoured, willingly, a hundred more; such a regard had he for the *holy church*.

NIM now thought it was time to push himself forward, and, forgetting his agreement with *Roger*, set all hands to work. The *Parson* was his fast friend. *Hopeful* was now a man of enterprize, and, if holydays did not comethick, could stick to *business*. *Nim's* first scheme was to have him made *chairman* at the quarter-session, as that would make him popular among the justices; and, if they had a majority of the justices, they could do any business the deputy had a mind, and so *Roger* might be laid by. They worked cunning enough for a while. *Nim*, with

C

his

The parson. The present private.

his son and heir, *Hopeful* and his *comrades*, were all *court* and *compliment* to *Roger*, cryed him up in all companies; but under-hand, were setting the *Parson* against him, and engaged to the *Parson*, that he should rule the *roast*, in a little time, instead of *Roger*, and have all the Farmers and *yeomanry* on his side; tho' they meant nothing less than *his interest*; for indeed it was impossible he could be bettered by any interest, or get any more preferment; but they thought it *politick* to let him appear to be the *principal*. *Roger* got an *inkling* of their design, but resolved they should *shew themselves* a little more before he set about to *shew* them. They were watching all opportunities to get new friends among the justices, and try'd to get one of the King's *boatmen* into the commission. They pushed him on, and assisted him with might and main; and all the while were writing, and curling, and swearing to *Roger*, they were against him; and that if *Roger* did not like to have him on the bench, they would soon put a *spoke in his wheel*, and stop his driving. *Roger* thanked them, but thought himself as good a workman as any of them, and *put the spoke in the wheel* without standing to their curtesy; so the *boatmen* went back to his station. *Roger* now had a clear view of every

y. Boatmen. Cawngarh

every thing they intended, and how they put off matters to a more lucky time. *Roger* had few tricks in him; but was not to be *caught with chaff*. Moreover, he had used some times to set traps in the meadows to catch the *old foxes*, and thought it might be easy to snap the *cubs*.

NIM's party, for he appeared but little in it himself, were all youngsters, and made a kind of privy-council for the *Parson*. There was, *imprimis*, young *Hopeful*; *Jack the Attorney*, just out of his time; *Dick* the clerk in the excise-office: but their chief strength was *ancient Pistol*, lately come from the wars, and content, while the peace lasted, to *doff* his sword and jack-boots for the more gainful employment of a *scrivener*; and to do the *blade* justice, he wrote a main good hand, and was a fair spoken lad as you would hear in a hundred; but he was deadly fond of *pitch'd battles*, with as little luck as they had in *Flanders*, and seemed to have less skill in a *home war* than a *foreign one*, where he behaved as well as any of them. *Roger* saw them in high spirits, and soon gave them an opportunity of exerting them.

Gimcrack, one of their cronies, had been *put in* by the *deputy* to oversee the *bridges* in the county, repair market-houses and hospitals, (tho' not the session-house) and

Jack the Attorney, *Councillor Perry*
Dick Johnson by: *Acme*. *Pistol*
George Shakspeare. *Gimcrack*. *Pawil*

was allowed handsomely for his trouble. Now, it was *Gimcrack's* misfortune, not to know the difference between a *cube* and *arch*, a *sky-light* and a *Venetian*, and other things of little consequence in masonry; but the material part of the *mystery* he understood *to a root*. If he repaired a bridge, he charged *double*; if he did not repair it, *quadruple*; if there was *no bridge*, *sixteen*; and so, all in *geometrical* proportions, that he might not go *out of rule*. When he brought his bill before the *grand-jury*, *Hopeful* wondered how he could work so cheap; *Pistol* moved he might have the thanks of the county for his *parsimonious* management of the publick money, *ten pounds* of which he saved them to demonstration; for in one bill he charged *twenty*, and in another only *ten pounds*. But when *Roger* looked on the *dates*, he found the *last* bill was *twenty*, which seemed, to him, to overturn the demonstration; and, for the little he knew of *arithmetick*, thought it looked more like *addition* than *subtraction*. But *Gimcrack's* friends made light of these remarks, clapped him on the back, and swore they would bear him harmless.

AND here they fairly threw off all reserve, bit the *nail*, and turned the heel on *Roger*; and a thousand stories they told

told of *him* and his friends to the *deputy*. First, *Roger* had no interest at all ; then he had so much that he was *dangerous* ; then *Gimcrack* was the best *bridge-builder* in the world ; *Roger* was for having *every bridge* and *market-house* in the county fall to decay, from the desire he had to see the county ruined, and the people *fink* or *swim* for his diversion. The Deputy, who was really a good-natured man, pity'd the poor people, and joined to take them out of *Roger's* hands ; he spoke to his acquaintance of the *grand-jury* ; and tho' he did not *reflect* on *Roger*, yet he mainly magnify'd the *Parson*, and wished they would take any directions *he* should *send them*, as he could not go among them himself, which, he *said*, and *Pistol* swore, should be for their good. So, on both sides, they mustered their forces, and *Roger*, on the *poll*, had just two in three of his side, and *Gimcrack* went to pot.

THIS was a cruel blow, but chiefly bore hard on *young Hopeful* ; if ever he had a chance for the *chair* at quarter-sessions, it was now over ; the whole county saw the design on both sides. The *Parson* and *Hopeful* wanted to rule the county, who, for aught we know, might do it well ; but we were *sure Roger* had done so. He wanted nothing, and asked nothing

thing for himself ; one of his sons got a second-hand pair of *red breeches* and *white stockings*, which he paid more for than if he had bought them in *Monmouth-street*. He got a friend of his made an *exciseman* ; but when he asked for a *constable's place* he was refused. However, he went on in the old track, and *Hopeful* and the *Parson* redoubled their efforts to *oust* him. One plot they laid upon another, and trick upon trick. *Pistol* (who was *pretty much a stranger*) wondered none of them succeeded ; but they wanted somebody to tell them, that tho' *tricks* may get the better of a *trickster*, they are lost and squandered on one who has no *tricks*. If a man takes to *corners*, or *short turns*, you may *meet* him on a short turn, or find him in a corner ; but how the D---l will you catch him if he never comes there ? *Roger* walked the *turnpike* and the *middle stone* of the street. *Hopeful*, *Pistol*, and the *Parson*, were all *peeping* to watch him. Now, says *Hopeful*, he'll come down this *bye turn*. Here, says the *Parson*, down this *alley*, as it's the *nearest way*. *Pistol* was sure of him at the *turn-stile*. But *Roger* had found, by *constant walking*, that farthest about was the *ready way home*. When they saw him *fairly* passed, they *looked* at one another like a sett of *rooks*, who

who have lost their money to a *fair gamester*; and since they could not *take him in*, or make any thing of the game they first took in hand, they began to attack his *friends* and *cronies*. One had a *little allowance* from the county for something *he had done*; another, perhaps, for something *he had not done*; a third, in consideration of his father's having been willing to do some service to the county, if he had happened to have ever been in it; and the like gratifications were bestowed on many, but not by *Roger's* recommendation. He got indeed a small pittance for *Treat-all*, which just served to buy him a few *Ortolans*, and a little canary wine. All these they *cashiered* to vex *Roger*; whereas he cared not, for any matter of profit he had, if they took his own places away. Upon their being *convinced* of *Roger's* resolution in these and sundry other points, they put his *friends* on the *list* again, and turned their whole resentment on the *exciseman*, who had talked briskly, in all companies, on *Roger's* behalf. Besides, the *surveyors* did not rightly like him. All the *brewers* of the parish hated him into the bargain, because he kept them tight, and made them *drink as they brewed*; but the former *exciseman* they

*eat all. Bellingham Boyle
Exciseman. Rich. Cox*

they adored, and a good man he was ; they might *brew* three times a week for him ; and yet look over his book for a month it was all silent. Now and then, on an office day, he might condemn a barrel of small beer for example.

BUT to draw to an end of this *first part of the history*. *Roger* has more interest than ever ; the *Parson* seems to have done ; *Nim* has retired into the country ; *Hopeful* may look after his *surveying*, and play foot-ball on holydays ; *Pistol* is gone back to change his cloaths, and exercise his men. And now they are all parted, we may hope for peace and quietness 'till next *Quarter-session*.

F. I. N. I. S.



